



Important Notice

House Joint Resolution No. 3 Hearing

Statewide public safety radio users are encouraged to show their support at a legislative hearing on a bill requesting an interim study to determine long-term funding options for the statewide interoperable public safety communications system.

The Federal Relations, Energy and Telecommunications Committee is holding the hearing on House Joint Resolution No. 3 at 3:00 pm on Mon., Jan. 17, in Room 172 of the State Capitol in Helena.

The study provides an opportunity for a third-party to objectively examine the long-term viability of a statewide public safety radio communications system. Public safety first responders are urged to attend and testify if desired.

Local Leaders Show Support of Their Public Safety Communications System

By Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director

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Over the last three weeks, leaders from Interoperability Montana (IM) met with county commissioners, city managers and other public safety officials in more than a dozen counties across Montana. They explained the ongoing IM funding plan and asked for local support.

In those discussions, local leaders heard clearly from their public safety officials and first responders about the importance of having a new system they can use to improve communications with each other and provide the public with enhanced capabilities to respond to incidents.

As a result of those discussions, numerous local jurisdictions have stepped up to support the IM project by making a commitment to help address IM's budget needs. Those contributions will help ensure that the project stays on track and that local jurisdictions continue to receive support services.

Montana's approach to statewide interoperable public safety communications has been a "grass-roots" approach from the beginning. Local jurisdictions have come together to address common needs, achieve common goals and get the job done by supporting each other.

The IM organization is grateful for the support it has received from Montana's county and city governments and would like to say thanks to those that have made commitments thus far.

Jurisdictions that have made commitments are: Beaverhead, Blaine, Broadwater, Custer, Dawson, Fergus, Jefferson, Powell, Richland, Roosevelt and Sheridan Counties. Additionally, the City of Lewistown and the Butte-Silver Bow 9-1-1 Committee have committed financial support.

Meanwhile, Cascade, Daniels, Madison and Yellowstone Counties are considering contributions, but still must take formal action as part of their regular public processes.

The outreach effort will continue over the next couple of weeks around the state until the IM has met with all jurisdictions that have benefited from the IM Project.

IMFC Adopts Accounting Procedures

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Members of the IM Finance Committee (IMFC) adopted internal technical accounting procedures at their Mon., Jan. 10 meeting in Helena. They also confirmed the committee's membership, reported on task assignments, reviewed the check register, and examined various funding reports. Irene Bushnell, Anderson ZurMuehlen, is preparing a financial report that includes local matching funds for the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) grant, and efforts are underway to obtain additional documentation of local financial matches. Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, indicated that other than the upcoming microwave contract, all PSIC-funded work is nearing completion.

Participants also examined current and future IM budgets and reviewed proposed cuts. Kevin pointed out that over the past two years, the IM has reduced project management costs by 67% and experienced a 400% increase in project completion. He also reported on award letters, purchase orders and progress being made. A verbal approval has been received to extend FY07 DHS grant funds.

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The Short Term Funding Plan has been revised based on commitments from local jurisdictions (see article above). Carl Hotvedt, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), also has been seeking support from state agencies. Dave Larsen, Disaster and Emergency Services (DES), reported that audits began at DES on Jan. 12 and will continue into March with the objective of determining whether state distribution of DHS grant program funds has strategically and effectively complied with laws, regulation and guidance. Kevin reported that the IM financial audit is well underway, and it should be complete in the next two weeks.

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

The next IM Finance Committee is scheduled for Mon., Feb. 14 in Helena at a location to be announced.

IMGC Reviews Election Policy

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The IM Governance Committee (IMGC) met in Helena on Mon., Jan. 10, and reviewed the IM policy for election of officers, which will take place at the Feb. 15 IM Project Directors (IMPD) meeting. George Gupton, Mineral County DES and IM Staffing Sub-Committee Chair, is accepting nominations for the Chair and First and Second Vice Chair positions, which are due no later than the morning of Feb. 15.

Members also examined amendments to the bylaws and moved to support their adoption at the Jan. 11 IMPD meeting. In addition, they reviewed the committee's membership, task list, and training activities, including a Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) that is planned for the Northern Tier and Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Technical Assistance Requests.

A report from the Legislative Sub-Committee was given, and members learned that the Request for an Interim Study is now House Joint Resolution 3, and a hearing is scheduled on Mon., Jan. 17 with the Federal Energy and Telecommunications Committee. Bill Fleiner, IM Governance Committee Chair, announced the formation of a Governance Structure Sub-Committee to be chaired by Sheriff Leo Dutton, Lewis and Clark County.

Kevin Bruski gave the Executive Director report, noting that his main mission has been explaining the IM funding plan and obtaining financial support from local jurisdictions, which has been successful thus far. Ian Marquand, IM Public Affairs and Outreach, reported that the MT Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (MSPOA) Governmental Relations Committee has agreed to support the Interim Study Commission for a statewide interoperable public safety communications system. An article on the subject appears in this month's MACo newsletter, available at: <http://www.maco.cog.mt.us/newsletters/2011-newsletters/web-optimized/january-2011-optimized.pdf>.

The next meeting of the IM Governance Committee will be Mon., Feb. 14 in Helena at a location to be announced.

IMPD Adopts Revised Bylaws

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

At the Tues., Jan. 11 meeting of the IM Project Directors (IMPD), the board formally adopted revised bylaws for the organization. These are available here: http://interop.mt.gov/content/docs/pd/IMPD_Bylaws_Final_2011_01_11.doc. In addition, the board adopted its internal accounting procedures and Chief Michaels, IMPD Chair, formally re-appointed Standing Committee

Chairs as follows:

- Audit Committee: Dave McPherson, Butte-Silver Bow
- Finance Committee: Sheriff John Walsh, Butte-Silver Bow
- Governance Committee: Bill Fleiner, Broadwater County
- Technical Committee: Jason Norman, Acting Chair; MT Dept. of Transportation

Dave Hinds gave a positive update on the U.S. Air Force project in Central Montana, communicating that the joint Highwood Baldy site has been operational for more than a year now. Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, presented a comprehensive update on budgets, the second mater controller, the Northern Tier Project and accomplishments in the Central Consortium, Gallatin County Area and in Butte-Silver Bow. Ian Marquand, Public Affairs and Outreach reported on activities related to the short-term finance plan and the legislature.

Members listened to reports from IM Standing Committees and conducted an in-depth review of funding reports, budgets and a Short-Term Funding Plan. It was agreed that Jan. 24 would be the date by which the IM will determine if enough support is available from local jurisdictions to permit the IM to move forward with its operations.

In other business, members learned that MACo's President has expanded MACo's Information Technology/Telecommunications Committee to include Interoperability Montana. Kevin also informed members that the IM will be audited by the Office of the Inspectors General beginning Jan. 25. IM Project Directors may be contacted individually, too. In addition, he asked for copies of "After-Action" reports of any training exercises involving communications. This documentation is needed for federal reporting.

The next IMPD meeting is set for Tues., Feb. 15 in Helena at a location to be announced.

Upcoming Meetings

• Thurs., Jan. 20

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium

Butte • 10:00 am - noon

Butte Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George Street

• Mon., Jan. 24

IM Technical Committee Meeting (IMTC)

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

Special 2-Hour Exalt Communications Presentation

http://interop.mt.gov/imtc_meetings.mcp

• Tues., Jan. 25

Tri-County Consortium

Helena • 10:00 am - noon

IM Offices, 2717 Skyway Dr.

• Tues., Jan. 25

State Agency Radio Users Task Force

Helena • 9:00 – 10:30 am

Rm. 109, Old Livestock Building, 1310 E. Lockey St.